State funding of elections

2715. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to introduce state funding of elections;

(b) whether Government have constituted any Expert Committee/Study Group etc. to examine the matter;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time frame within which the proposal would be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The process of reforms/changes of electoral laws and other related matters is a continuous and ongoing process and can be carried out only through consensus among political parties. Since it is a long drawn process, it is not possible to indicate any time frame.

Prisoners in jails

2716. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studied the recent statistics put out by the International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS) listing US at the top with 2,079 million of its people in prison in 2004;

(b) whether as compared to US, China and India ranked second and third with 15,49,000 and 3,14,000 prisoners in jails, respectively, during the year 2004; and

(c) if so, whether this is indicative of very low conviction rate prevailing in the country, leaving criminals to roam about freely aggravating the law and order situation?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI HANSRAJ BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Speedy disposal of pending cases

†2717. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of pending cases have been disposed of by the Fast Track Courts established during the recent years;

(b) if so, the number of cases disposed of by these Courts till December, 2004;

(c) whether Government have made any future plan for the speedy disposal of pending cases;

(d) if so, the details of the plan; and

(f) the target fixed as to the number of cases to be disposed of annually under this plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per information received in the Department of Justice, as on 31st December, 2004, about 6.07 lakh cases have been disposed of by the Fast Track Courts.

(c) and (d) Department of Justice had requested the 12th Finance Commission to recommend the continuation of existing Fast Track Courts, and creation of another 1500 new Fast Track Courts at the Magisterial Level. However, the 12th Finance Commission has not made any recommendations in this regard. Realising that Information Technology will play a vital role in effective functioning of courts, Department of Justice has taken up computerisation of Judiciary in the country on a large scale. The pilot project for computerization of city courts in four metropolitan city of Cnennai, Delhi Mumbai and Kolkata was taken up at a cost of Rs. 17.80 crores. As an extension of this project, funds to the tune of Rs. 24.24 crores have already been released

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.